

THE SHAMBHALA MEDITATION  
CENTER  
OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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MARCH NEWSLETTER 2004

TRUNGPA RINPOCHE MEETS JONI MITCHELL :

*From an interview with Joni Mitchell:*

INT: Trungpa did some very weird things.

JM: Oh, yeah. He was the bad boy of Zen. I wrote a song about a visit I made to him called "Refuge of the Road." I consider him one of my great teachers, even though I saw him only three times. Once I had a fifteen-minute audience with him in which we argued. He told me to quit analyzing. I told him I couldn't - I'm an artist, you know. Then he induced into me a temporary state where the concept of "I" was absent, which lasted for three days.

INT: Wow, that's very rare. Immediate transmission.

JM: Immediate, and from then on it was my decision whether to make that my life. But you can't function from there as an artist.

INT: Did you ever tell him how much you learned from him?

JM: Yes. At the very end of Trungpa's life I went to visit him. I wanted to thank him. He was not well. He was green and his eyes had no spirit in them at all, which sort of stunned me, because the previous times I'd seen him he was quite merry and puckish - you know, saying "shit" a lot. I leaned over and looked into his eyes, and I said, "How is it in there? What do you see in there? And this voice came, like, out of a void, and it said, "Nothing." So, I went over and whispered in his ear, "I just came to tell you that when I left you that time, I had three whole days without self consciousness, and I wanted to thank you for the experience." And he looked up at me, and all the light came back into his face and he goes, "Really?" And then he sank back into this black void again.

INT: How would you sum up Trungpa's effect on your life?

JM: Well, who knows? His particular lineage uses a teaching device that involves shocking you. Trungpa stopped me in my tracks. Made a space. Wham. He pushed back all this stuff, and it stayed pushed back for three days.

*The verse of the song:*

I met a friend of spirit  
He drank and womanized  
And I sat before his sanity  
I was holding back from crying

He saw my complications  
And he mirrored me back simplified  
And we laughed how our perfection  
Would always be denied  
"Heart and humor and humility"  
He said "Will lighten up your heavy load"  
I left him for the refuge of the roads

The song is "Refuge of the Roads" from the album Hejira.

Joni recently rerecorded it with a symphony orchestra and, with the lyrics slightly altered, on the album Travelogue which also has a brochure in which many of her paintings are reproduced, including one of the Vidyadhara.

(Perhaps Ms. Mitchell might possibly have been able to incorporate her experience of non-ego into her artistic career if she had absorbed the principles of Dharma Art from Trungpa Rinpoche's source book available in our Center's library.)

THE VAJRA GUARDS REVEALED :

*Excerpts from "True Command"*

This new book, now available at our Center's library, exposes the forms, functions and mission of the Dorje Kasung through an introduction by James Gimian, Kasung Dapön Kyi Khyap (ret.) and transcripts of talks to the Kasung by Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche known militarily as the Dorje Dradül of Mukpo or the Makkyi Rabjam.

Kasung Dapön Kyi Khyap -

p.xxvii: "In the Dorje Kasung discipline the uniform first serves as a reminder of one's duty, the commitment to serve others. It encourages a high level of personal decorum, mindfulness of one's body, and holding oneself upright with good posture. In turn, this affects how the uniform wearer relates to his or her own mind, fostering simplicity and directness, and cutting through discursiveness. This produces the experience of synchronizing the body and mind and engenders a gentle but strong wakeful energy that radiates out."

p.xl: "In the Dorje Kasung discipline a weapon is any device used for creating a sense of sacred space, such as a lapel pin, a flag, a pen, or the faculty of speech. The Dorje Dradül proclaimed that gentleness was the greatest weapon, and it was the Dorje Kasung's duty to "shoot" people's deception. By shooting deception,

he meant that by acting with accuracy and directness the Dorje Kasung could create a simplified world capable of overcoming the deviousness that seduces a person away from genuine practice." The Dorje Dradül of Mukpo -

p.26: "When there are Dorje Kasung present, some people may feel paranoid and accuse us of being a fascist group, as has already happened. The real role of the Dorje Kasung is to provide tremendous accommodation and hospitality and to create the atmosphere for the teachings to be presented."

p.95: "Our approach is very gentle, absolutely gentle, with good head and shoulders and good presence. This is very confusing for people because in ordinary situations, when we talk about the concept of a bodyguard, it means kill or cure, with bulging muscles. Our approach is that the ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard are very impressive and good in their standing, literally speaking. When they open their mouths, when they connect with people, they manifest very gently and beautifully.

That's a very interesting kind of weapon, if we could call gentleness a weapon at all. It's a communication system."

## CENTER ACTIVITIES:

### *- Study Programs*

March 17 - April 14 Walking the Bodhisattva Path (teacher tba)

March 27-28 The 9 Stages of Shamatha (Michael Greenleaf)

Course books: Taming the Mind and Walking the Bodhisattva Path. We will have them for sale at class and available in the library.

Taming the Mind, together with its companion course, Walking the Bodhisattva Path, introduces a student to the view and practice of Hinayana and Mahayana. These courses are based on a three-week seminar taught by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche at Karme Choling in November 1999. In Taming the Mind, Rinpoche presents the hinayana path of renouncing samsara and the joy of developing discipline on the path that leads to liberation. He emphasizes the importance of having the confidence that comes from understanding what we are doing and presents the path in a vast perspective.

Myra Woodruff will lead the Maitri: Five Wisdom Energies Weekend Intensive in May. We're in the process of finalizing the dates.

We are delighted to announce that Ken McLeod will be teaching a workshop here, June 9-13.

The workshop has the title Awakening from Belief: the end of the karmic nightmare. More details can be found at

<http://www.unfetteredmind.com/med/retreats.php#karmic>  
Although we have done no publicity as yet, we already have 20 informal registrations, and are planning to cap it at around 35 so that all participants can have private interviews with Ken each day. Cost for the workshop is \$190, and some scholarship aid is available. If you are interested in attending, notify Newcomb at [newcomb@fcgnetworks.net](mailto:newcomb@fcgnetworks.net) or write him at the Center address and he will send you a registration form. Karme Choling is making housing available for out-or-town attendees.

If you are unfamiliar with his teachings, Ken McLeod is the author of Wake Up to Your Life, of which the Loppön Lodrö Dorje has written: Wake Up to Your Life is a genuinely interesting dharma book. It contains a sequence of vipashyana and awareness exercises which are shot through everywhere with provocative insights and useful distinctions.

### *- Practice*

Recently we've been bringing the members of our Work Camp sangha to nyinthuns at the Center. At the end of the December nyinthun one of the guys asked me, "Why is it that the only people who did the whole nyinthun were us inmates and their escorts?" I didn't have a very good answer, in part because I had to admit that if I hadn't been an escort, I would not have done the whole nyinthun. At most, if I was staffing, I would have done all of the morning, or all of the afternoon. Otherwise I would have dropped in for an hour or two of sitting. After all, it's Sunday, it's supposed to be a day of rest.

Certainly the inmates are motivated in part by the desire to get away from the Work Camp.

But also, they are new enough to the dharma to still regard a day of sitting as an adventure and a treat, a journey into the nature of mind. So many of us old dogs have lost that sense of wonder. So I would like to invite you to rediscover that sense of wonder by doing a full nyinthun at the Center, starting at 9:00. From 12:00 to 1:00 we eat together in a simple single-bowl oriyoki style. The afternoon session goes from 1:00 to 3:30. We'll be doing it on Sunday, March 7. - Newcomb

Take notice that the Tuesday morning sitting period has been dropped due to a lack of attendance.

### *- Library News*

\$500. has been allocated for new book acquisitions. Any suggestions?

### - Our Facilities

Michael has obtained a permit for a chair lift from the state and made a grant in aid application to the Area Agency for Aging. Current cost estimate is around \$5000. installed. More details will be forthcoming.

Thanks to Greg McNally we have a well lit hallway now. Some thought is being given to having a paid receptionist, perhaps for an hour or two each week before sitting.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

Coordinators: Tune Faulkner & Newcomb  
Greenleaf  
Practice: Mary Beth Furr  
Finance: Vicky Schafer & Emily McAdoo  
Facilities: Michael Leszczynski  
Publicity: Sal DeMaio  
Study: Anne Stevens  
Secretary Karen Bufka  
Rusung: Michael Taney  
Membership: Barry Rossinoff

### ENCOURAGEMENT

We welcome submissions of any material, text or image, humorous or serene, that you think elucidates the views and practices of our center and would be appropriate for inclusion here.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES :

#### Review Groups:

The Shambhala Community Plan creates thirteen Working Groups and Advisory Groups on major topics in the life of our mandala. Each group will be made up of about a dozen Shambhalian drawn from all parts of our community. To ensure maximum community input and feedback on each topic, there will also be Review Groups which will be open to anyone with an interest in any of these topics. The Review Groups will receive the initial proposals from the Working and Advisory Groups for discussion, and may take on major pieces of work themselves. They will function through email and conference calls. Richard Reoch is inviting people to sign up for participation in these Review Groups. Sign-up sheets for these groups will be available at the Center.

The thirteen Review Groups are:  
Communications Community Care  
Congress Planning  
Diversity and Accessibility  
Environmental Policy  
Leadership and Succession Planning  
Mandala Structure and Governance  
Membership Policy  
New Economic Model  
Outreach  
Practice and Education  
Shambhala Conduct  
Social Engagement

I encourage you to become involved in this continuation of the work of the Shambhala Congress. - Newcomb





# *Shambhala Meditation Center*

## *of St. Johnsbury*

March 2004

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>1</b> 6:00pm yoga	<b>2</b> 5:00-6:30pm Tai Chi 6:30pm Executive Committee Meeting	<b>3</b> 6:00-7:00pm silent sitting	<b>4</b> 9:00am yoga 6:00-7:00pm sitting and chants 7:10pm talk - 'Green Sangha'	<b>5</b> 9:00am yoga	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:00am-noon, 1:00-3:30pm nyinthun 5:00pm Werma Feast
<b>8</b> 6:00pm yoga	<b>9</b> 5:00-6:30pm Tai Chi	<b>10</b> 6:00-7:00pm silent sitting	<b>11</b> 9:00am yoga 6:00-7:00pm sitting and chants 7:10pm talk	<b>12</b> 9:00am yoga	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 11:00-12:00am sitting and chants
<b>15</b> 6:00pm yoga	<b>16</b> 5:00-6:30pm Tai Chi	<b>17</b> 6:00-7:00pm silent sitting 7:10pm Walking The Bodhisattva Path class	<b>18</b> 9:00am yoga 6:00-7:00pm sitting and chants 7:10pm talk	<b>19</b> 9:00am yoga	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 11:00-12:00am sitting and chants
<b>22</b> 6:00pm yoga	<b>23</b> 5:00-6:30pm Tai Chi	<b>24</b> 6:00-7:00pm silent sitting 7:10pm Walking The Bodhisattva Path class	<b>25</b> 9:00am yoga 6:00-7:00pm sitting and chants 7:10pm talk	<b>26</b> 9:00am yoga	<b>27</b> 9 Stages Of Shamatha intensive	<b>28</b> 9 Stages Of Shamatha intensive 11:00-12:00am sitting and chants
<b>29</b> 6:00pm yoga	<b>30</b> 5:00-6:30pm Tai Chi	<b>31</b> 6:00-7:00pm silent sitting 7:10pm Walking The Bodhisattva Path class				